

Stills has staying power

STEPHEN STILLS/MANASSAS Down The Road (Atlantic K40440). After a worthy but somewhat indigestible double album debut, Manassas have wisely pruned it down to produce a solid, sturdy second album. A supremely competent mainstream rock band, they tend to avoid dramatics, and Down The Road consequently takes a number of hearings for its personality to show — Stills is not an adventurous songwriter, and he wrote all but one song here. Manassas' virtues are in the direction of good robust funk — no flashy fireworks at all. The only surprise comes from two Latin numbers, which rate as the two most immediate successes — but give it a chance, and this album's staying power shines through. RS.

MIRRORPICK-IP

Mike Hennessey, Mitch Howard, Peter Jones, Val Mabbs, Rick Sanders

Wishbone Ash take it easy



WISHBONE ASH Wishbone Four (MDKS 8011 MCA). At times the production on this album is not up to the standard that might be expected, but the numbers themselves are generally good. The use of vocals has increased, and the group themselves describe this album as containing more songs than is usual for them. Sing Out A Song has lovely drawling steel guitar, acoustic guitars and a gentle vocal. The girl vocalists on No Easy Road add some gospel feel, and there's very much the feel of Bowie captured on Everybody Needs A Friend; which actually has a line the image of "I'd love to turn you on" from the Beatles' Day In The Life. That may make it sound like a rip off, but it's a rather cosy number, like slipping into your favourite angora sweater. VM.

PETE SEEGER

The Best Of . . . (CBS 68201): A two-album set, and all the Seeger standards are included — We Shall Overcome, Where Have All The Flowers Gone, Little Boxes, If I Had A Hammer, This Land Is Your Land. Good and consistent value from the man who started out in the classics but was turned on to folk early in life.

JOAN BAEZ

The Baez Ballad Book (CBS Vanguard 41/42): Let the sleeve notes tell it as it is: When Joan emerged as a major artist in the early 1960s, it was as a superb singer of traditional songs. Here is a definitive collection of her most beautiful and haunting early performances of the classic British and American ballads and folksongs.

THE MAIN INGREDIENT

Bitter Sweet (RCA Victor SF 8339): Three-strong vocal team who get such big fat harmonies going that they could well be an eight-piecer. Set in some splendid string - and - horn arrangements, they reach out for a kind of commercial soul which doesn't veer too far from the melodic line. Lead voice is quite outstanding.

JOHNNY OTIS

Pioneers Of Rock Volume 3 (Starline SRS 5129): Mostly his own songs, first released at the tail-end of the 1950s, and including Three Girls Named Molly, Willie And The Hand Jive, Casting My Spell and the exciting Crazy Country Hop. Incidentally the first two rock pioneers featured in this series were Wanda Jackson and Gene Vincent.

JULIE ANDREWS

The Best Of . . . (CBS 68234): Two-record set of the Miss Julia Elizabeth Welles, late of Walton - on - Thames, and now Queen of Hollywood's musical scene. It all started with the Boyfriend and then Sound Of Music, Camelot, My Fair Lady, and on and on. Songs from the shows; delivered with rather prim superstar appeal.

TINA HARVEY

Tina Harvey (UK UKAL 1002): Tina, a Jonathan King "find", has a very off-beat voice; that's for sure. She can soul-sell in the lower reaches; plead as with Stay With Me in the upper range; and through it all exudes what's best called "maximum effort." You'll either love her . . . or!

TAJ MAHAL

Sounder (CBS 70123): Movie score — the production featured Cicely Tyson and Paul Winfield. Lightnin' Hopkins turns up herein to sing the theme Needed Time, and Taj Mahal wrote the whole always-interesting music. Three tracks written for the film, but eventually omitted, are also included here.

SOUNDTRACK

The Life And Times Of Judge Bean (CBS 70118): The Paul Newman-Ava Gardner starer, all about the man who became a legend. Maurice Jarre wrote the musical side of it, and Andy Williams sings one title, Marmalade Molasses and Honey. And Mr. Newman himself sings The Matchmaker, which incorporates Yellow Rose Of Texas.

GLEN CAMPBELL

Two sides Of . . . (Starline SRS 5142): Recordings from Recordings instrumentals included 1968 64 cm when the

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